

The Land of Broken Promises

By DANE COOLIDGE

A Stirring Story of the Mexican Revolution

Author of
"THE FIGHTING FOOL," "HIDDEN WATERS,"
"THE TEXICAN," Etc.
Illustrations by DON J. LAVIN

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A story of border Mexico, vivid, intense, such as has never before been written, is this one of American adventures into the land of manana. Texan, mining engineer, Spanish señor and señorita, peon, Indian, crowd its chapters with clear-cut word pictures of business, adventure and love, against a somber background of wretched armies marching and counter-marching across a land racked by revolution and without a savior.

CHAPTER I.

The slow-rolling winter's sun rose coldly, far to the south, riding up from behind the saw-toothed Sierras of Mexico to throw a silvery halo on Gadsden, the border city. A hundred miles of desert lay in its path—a waste of broken ridges, dry arroyos, and sandy plains—and then suddenly, as if by magic, the city rose gleaming in the sun.

It was a big city, for the West, and swarming with traffic and men. Its broad main street, lined with brick buildings and thronging with automobiles, ran from the railroad straight to the south until, at a line, it stopped short and was lost in the desert.

That line which marked the sudden end of growth and progress was the border of the United States; the desert was Mexico. And the difference was not in the land, but in the government.

As the morning air grew warm and the hoar frost dripped down from the roofs the flocks of the town crept forth, leaving chill lodgings and stale saloons for the street corners and the sun.

Against the dead wall of a big store the Mexicans gathered in shivering groups, their blankets wrapped around their necks and their brown ankles bare to the wind. On another corner a bunch of cowboys stood clannishly aloof, eying the passing crowd for others of their kind.

In this sun stream which flowed under the morning sun there were mining men, with high-laced boots and bulging pockets; graybeards, with the gossip of the town in their cheeks; hoboes, still wearing their eastern caps and still rustling for a quarter to eat on; somber-eyed refugees and soldiers of fortune from Mexico—but all of them, each seeking his class and kind.

If any women passed that way they walked fast, looking neither to the right nor to the left; for they, too, being so few, missed their class and kind.

Gadsden had become a city of men, huge-limbed and powerful and with a questioning look in their eyes; a city of adventurers gathered from the ends of the world. A common calamity had driven them from their mines and ranches and cluttered the town with men, for the war was on in Mexico and from the farthest corners of Sonora they still came, hot from some new scene of murder and pillage, to add to the general discontent.

As the day wore on the crowd on the bank corner, where the refugees made their stand, changed its complexion, grew big, and stretched far up the street. Men stood in shifting groups, talking, arguing, gazing moodily at those who passed.

Here were hawk-eyed Texas cattlemen, thinking of their scattered herds at Mababi or El Tigre; mining men, with idle prospects and deserted mines as far south as the Rio Yaqui; mill-men, ranchers and men of trades; all driven in from below the line and all chafing at the leash. While a hundred petty chiefs stood out against Madero and lived by ransom and loot, they must cool their heels in Gadsden and wait for the end to come.

Into this seething mass of the dispossessed, many of whom had lost a fortune by the war, there came two more, with their faces still drawn and wet from hard riding through the cold. They stepped forth from the marble entrance of the big hotel and swung off down the street to see the town.

They walked slowly, gazing into the strange faces in the vague hope of finding some friend; and Gadsden, not to be outdone, looked them over curiously and wondered whence they had come.

The bunch of cowboys, still loitering on the corner, glanced scornfully at the smaller man, who sported a pair of puttees—and then at the big man's feet. Finding them encased in prospector's shoes they stared dumbly at his wind-burned face and muttered among themselves.

He was tall, and broad across the shoulders, with far-seeing blue eyes and a mop of light hair; and he walked on his toes, stiff-legged, away from the hipe like a man on horseback. The rumble of comment rose up again as he raked past and then a cowboy voice observed:

"I'll bet he's a cow-puncher!"

The big man looked back at them smugly out of the corner of his eye and went on without a word.

It is the boast of cowboys that they can tell another puncher at a glance, but they are not alone in this—there are other crafts that leave their mark and other men as shrewd. A group of mining men took one look at the smaller man, noting the candle-grease on his corduroys and the intelligence in his eyes; and to them the big man was no more than a laborer—or a shift-boss at most—and the little man was one of their kind. Every line in his mobile face spoke of intellect and decision, and as they walked, it was he who did the talking while the big man merely nodded and smiled.

They took a turn or two up the

street, now drifting into some clamorous saloon, now standing at gaze on the sidewalk; and as the drinks began to work, the little man became more and more animated, the big man more and more amiable in his assent and silence.

Then they passed the crowd of refugees they stopped and listened, commenting on the various opinions by an exchange of knowing smiles. An old prospector, white-haired and tanned to a tropic brown, finally turned upon a presumptuous optimist and the little man nodded approvingly as he heard him express his views.

"You can say what you please," the prospector ended, "but I'm going to keep out of that country. I've known them Mexicans for thirty years now and I'm telling you they're getting treacherous. It don't do no good to have your gun with you—they'll shoot you from behind a rock—and if they can't get you that way, they'll knife you in your sleep."

"I've noticed a big change in them paisanos since this war came on. Before Madero made his break they used to be scared of Americans—thought if they killed one of us the rest would cross the border and eat 'em up. What few times they did tackle a white man he generally gave a good account of himself, too, and I've traveled them trails for years without hardly knowing what it was to be afraid of anybody; but I tell you it's entirely different over there now!"

"Sure! That's right!" spoke up the little man, with spirit. "You're talking more sense than any man on the street. I guess I ought to know—I've been down there and through it all—and it's got so now that you can't trust any of 'em. My partner and I came clear from the Sierra Madre, riding nights, and we come pretty near knowing—hey, Bud!"

"That's right," observed Bud, the big man, with a reminiscent grin, "I begin to think them fellows would get us, for a while!"

"Mining men?" inquired the old prospector politely.

"Working on a lease," said the little man briefly. "Owner got scared out and let us in on shares. But no more for me—this will hold me for quite a while, I can tell you!"

"Here, too," agreed the big man, turning to go. "Arizona is good enough for me—come on, Phil!"

"Where to?" The little man drew back half resentfully, and then he changed his mind. "All right," he said, falling into step, "a gin fix for mine!"

"Not on an empty stomach," admonished his partner; "you might get lit up and tell somebody all you know. How about something to eat?"

"Good! But where're you going?"

The big man was leading off down a side street, and once more they came to a halt.

"Jim's place—it's a lunch-counter," he explained laconically. "The hotel's all right, and maybe that was a breakfast we got, but I got hungry waiting that way. Gimme a lunch-counter, where I can wrap my legs around a stool and watch the cook turn 'em over. Come on—I been there before."

An expression of pitying tolerance came over the little man's face as he listened to this rhapsody on the quick lunch, but he drew away reluctantly.

"Aw, come on, Bud," he pleaded. "Have a little cake! What's the use of winning a stake if you're got to eat at a dog-joint? And besides—say, that was a peach of a girl that waited on this morning! Did you notice her hair? She was a pippin!"

The big man wagged his hand resignedly and started on his way.

"All right, partner," he observed; "if that's the deal she's probably looking for you. I'll meet you in the room."

"Aw, come on!" urged the other, but his heart was not in it, and he turned gaily away up the main street.

Left to himself, the big man went on to his lunch-counter, where he ordered oysters. "A dozen in the milk." Then he ordered a beefsteak, to make up for several he had missed, and asked the cook to fry it rare. He was just negotiating for a can of peaches that had caught his eye when an old man came in and took the stool beside him, picking up the menu with trembling hand.

"Give me a cup of coffee," he said to the waiter, "and"—he gazed at the bill of fare carefully—"and a roast-beef sandwich. No, just the coffee!"

"All right," answered the waiter, who was no other than Sunny Jim, the proprietor, and, while he set it before the old man, who glanced at him in silence. For a fraction of a second he regarded the sandwich sympathetically; then, with the aid of his coffee, he made away with it and slipped down off his stool.

"Say," observed the proprietor, as Bud was paying his bill, "do you know who that old timer was?"

"What old timer?" inquired Bud, who had forgotten his brusque benefactor.

"Why, that old fellow that you treated to the sandwich."

"Oh—him! Some old drunk around town?" hazarded Bud.

"Well, he's that, too," conceded Sunny Jim, with a smile. "But lemme tell you, partner, if you had half the rocks that old boy's got you wouldn't need to punch any more cows. That's Henry Kruger, the man that just sold the Cross-Cut mine for fifty thousand cash, and he's got more besides."

"Huh!" grunted Bud, "he sure don't look it! Say, why didn't you put me

wise? Now I've got to hunt him up and apologize."

"Oh, that's all right," assured the proprietor; "he won't take any offense. That's just like old Henry—he's kinder queer that way."

"Well, I'll go and see him, anyway," said Bud. "He might think I was butting in."

And then, going about his duty with philosophical calm, he ambled off, stiff-legged, down the street.

CHAPTER II.

It was not difficult to find Henry Kruger in Gadsden. The barkeepers, those efficient purveyors of information and drinks, knew him as they knew their thumbs, and a casual round of the saloons soon located him in the back room of the Waldorf.

"Say," began Bud, walking bluffly up to him, "the proprietor of that restaurant back there tells me I made a mistake when I insisted on paying for your meal. I jest wanted to let you know—"

"Oh, that's all right, young man," returned Old Henry, looking up with a humorous smile; "we all of us make our mistakes. I knowed you didn't



"We All of Us Make Our Mistakes."

mean no offense and so I never took none. Fact is, I liked you all the better for it. This country is getting settled up with a class of people that never give a nickel to nobody. You paid for that meal like it was nothing, and never so much as looked at me. Sit down, sit down—I want to talk to you!"

They sat down by the stove and fell into a friendly conversation in which nothing more was said of the late adventure, but when Bud rose to go the old man beckoned him back.

"Hold on," he protested; "don't go off mad. I want to have a talk with you on business. You seem to be a pretty good young fellow—maybe we can make some dicker. What are you looking for in these parts?"

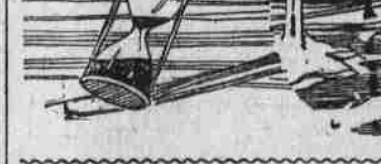
"Well," responded Bud, "some kind of a leasing proposition, I reckon. Me and my partner jest come in from Mexico, over near the Chihuahuan line, and we don't hardly know what we do want yet."

"Yes, I've noticed that partner of yours," remarked Henry Kruger dryly. "He's a great talker. I was listening to you boys out on the street there, having nothing else to do much, and being kinder on the lookout for a man, anyway, and it struck me I liked your line of talk best."

"You're easy satisfied, then," observed Bud, with a grin. "I never said a word hardly."

"That's it," returned Kruger significantly; "this job I've got calls for a man like that."

"Well, Phil's all right," spoke up Bud, with sudden warmth. "We been



GOAT AS A MILK PRODUCER
Germans Appreciate Animal's Value, and it is Increasing in Popularity in That Country.

The raising of goats in Germany has become increasingly popular during the last 20 years. It is claimed by goat breeders that four goats are as productive in milk as a medium-sized cow, and that the milk possesses, besides, a greater nutritive value.

In hospitals, children's homes, and houses for the treatment of sickness, goat's milk is often preferred, largely on account of its purity and its freedom from tubercular infection. Goats possess today as many advantages as a household animal as they did in ancient times in Asia Minor and Persia.

Two goats could furnish a small German household with milk, and the cost of maintenance is small. Trials have been made in the vicinity of large cities with goat dairies, but in almost every case they had to be discontinued on account of losses. Such large dairies have not been successful because large amounts of fodder had

to be purchased for the herd and because of the lack of sufficient meadow land. Finally, public opinion in cities must be educated to use and appreciate the milk of the goat in order to create a retail demand for it.

It is no doubt less palatable than cow's milk, and even in southern Europe, where goats are much more common than in Germany, it is used chiefly for the manufacture of cheese.

British Royal Academy.

The latest addition to membership in the British Royal Academy is Reginald T. Blomfield, architect. The new R. A. is the son of the late rector of Aldington, Kent, and is fifty-seven years of age. In 1911 he was president of the Royal Institute of British Architects. His principal works are domestic architecture and garden designs. He is the author of several works on architecture. G. A. Storey, A. R. A., has been appointed to the professorship of perspective at the academy, which has been revived after having been allowed to lapse half a century ago. Turner was elected to the professorship in 1808.

"I tell you," he said at last. "I'm not doing much talking about this proposition of mine. It's a big thing, and somebody might beat me to it. You know what I am, I guess. I've pulled off some of the biggest deals in this country for a poor man, and I don't make many mistakes—not about mineral, anyway. And when I tell you that this is rich—you're talking with a man that knows."

He fixed his shrewd, blue eyes on the young man's open countenance and waited for him to speak.

"That's right," he continued, as Bud finally nodded non-committally; "she's sure rich. I've had an eye on this proposition for years—just waiting for the right time to come. And now it's come! All I need is the man. It ain't a dangerous undertaking—leastwise I don't think it is—but I got to have somebody I can trust. I'm willing to pay you good wages, or I'll let you in on the deal—but you'll have to go down into Mexico."

"Nothing doing!" responded Bud with instant decision. "If it's in Arizona I'll talk to you, but no more Mexico for me. I've got something pretty good down there myself, as far as that goes."

"What's the matter?" inquired Kruger, set back by the abrupt refusal; "scared?"

"Yes, I'm scared," admitted Bud, and he challenged the old man with his eyes.

"Must have had a little trouble, then?"

"Well, you might call it that," agreed Bud. "We been on the dodge for a month. A bunch of revolutionists tried to get our treasure, and when we skipped out on 'em they tried to get us."

"Well," continued Kruger, "this proposition of mine is different. You was over in the Sierra Madre, where the natives are bad. These Sonora Mexicans ain't like them Chihuahuan fellows—they're Americanized. I'll tell you, if it wasn't that the people would know me I'd go down after this mine myself. The country's perfectly quiet. There's lots of Americans down there yet, and they don't even know there is a revolution. It ain't far from the railroad, you see, and that makes a lot of difference."

He lowered his voice to a confidential whisper as he revealed the approximate locality of his bonanza, but Bud remained unimpressed.

"Yes," he said, "we was near a railroad—the Northwestern—and seemed like them red-fleggers did nothing else but burn bridges and ditch supply trains. When they finally whipped 'em off the whole bunch took to the hills. That's where we got it again."

"Well," argued Kruger, "this railroad of ours is all right, and they run a train over it every day. The contractor at Fortuna—he lowered his voice again—"hasn't been shut down a day, and you'll be within fifteen miles of that town. No," he whispered; "I could get a hundred Americans to go in on this tomorrow, as far as the revolution's concerned. It ain't dangerous, but I want somebody I can trust."

"Nope," pronounced Bud, rising ponderously to his feet; "if it was this side the line I'd stay with you till the hair slipped on anything, but—"

"Well, let's talk it over again some time," urged Kruger, following him along out. "It ain't often I get took with a young fellow the way I was with you, and I believe we can make it yet. Where are you staying in town?"

"Up at the Cochise," said Bud. "Come on with me—I told my partner I'd meet him there."

"I've stated the proposition to Hooker," he said, "and he refused it. That's enough, ain't it?"

De Lancey laughed and turned away. "Well, yes, I guess it is." Then, in passing, he said to Bud: "Go ahead and talk to him."

He walked away, lighting a cigarette and smiling good-naturedly, and the old timer turned to Bud.

"That's a smart man you've got for a partner," he remarked. "A smart man. You want to look out," he added, "or he'll get away with you."

"Nope," said Bud. "You don't know him like I do. He's straight as a die."

"A man can be straight and still get away with you," observed the veteran shrewdly. "Yes, indeed." He paused to let this bit of wisdom sink in, and then he spoke again.

"You'd better quit—while you're lucky," he suggested. "You quit and come with me," he urged, "and if I strike it I'll make you a rich man. I don't need your partner on this deal. I need just one man that can keep his head shut. Listen now; I'll tell you what it is."

"I know where there's a lost mine down in Mexico. If I'd tell you the name you'd know it in a minute, and it's free gold, too. Now there's a fellow that had that land located for ten years, but he couldn't find the lead. D'ye see? And when this second revolution came on he let it go—he neglected to pay his mining taxes and let it go back to the government. And now all I want is a quiet man to slip in and denounce that land and open up the lead. Here, look at this!"

He went down into his pocket and brought out a bookskin sack, from which he handed over a piece of well-worn quartz.

They turned up the broad main street and passed in through the polished stone portals of the Cochise, a hotel so spacious in its interior and so richly appointed in its furnishings that a New Yorker, waking up there, might easily imagine himself on Fifth avenue.

It was hardly a place to be looked for in the West, and as Bud led the way across the echoing lobby to a pair of stuffed chairs he had a vague feeling of being in church. Stained-glass windows above the winding stairways let in a soft light, and on the towering pillars of marble were emblazoned prickly-pears as an emblem of the West. From the darkened balconies above, half-seen women looked down curiously as they entered, and in the broad lobby below were gathered the prosperous citizens of the land.

There were cattlemen, still wearing their boots and overalls, the better to attend to their shipping; mining men, just as they had come from the hills; and others more elegantly dressed—but they all had a nod for Henry Kruger. He was a man of mark, as Bud could see in a minute; but if he had other business with those who hailed him he let it pass and took out a rank bribe pipe, which he puffed while Bud smoked a cigarette.

They were sitting together in a friendly silence when Phil came out of the dining room, but as he drew near the old man nodded to Bud and went over to speak to the clerk.

"Who was that old timer you were talking to?" inquired Phil, as he sank down in the vacant chair. "Looks like the morning-after with him, don't it?"

"Um," grunted Bud; "reckon it is. Name's Kruger."

"What's the mining man?"

"That's right."

"Well," exclaimed Phil, "what in the world was he talking to you about?"

"Oh, some kind of a mining deal," grumbled Bud. "Wanted me to go down into Mexico!"

"What'd he tell you?" challenged the little man, sitting up suddenly in his chair. "Say, that old boy's got rocks!"

"He can keep 'em for all of me," observed Bud comfortably. "You know what I think about Mexico?"

"Sure! But what was his proposition? What did he want you to do?"

"Search me! He was mighty mysterious he could trust."

"Well, holy Moses, Bud!" cried Phil, "wake up! Didn't you get his proposition?"

"No, he wasn't talking about it. Said it was a good thing and he'd pay me well, or let me in on the deal; but when he hollered Mexico I quit. I've got a plenty."

"Yes, but—" the little man choked and could say no more. "Well, you're one jim dandy business man, Bud Hooker!" he burst out at last. "You'd let—"

"Well, what's the matter?" demanded Hooker defiantly. "Do you want to go back into Mexico? Nor me, neither! What you kicking about?"

"You might have led him on and got the scheme, anyway. Maybe there's a million in it. Come on, let's go over and talk to him. I'd take a chance, if it was good enough."

"Aw, don't be a fool, Phil," urged the cowboy plaintively. "We've got no call to hear his scheme unless we want to go in on it. Leave him alone and he'll do something for us on this side. Oh, crapes, what's the matter with you?"

He heaved himself reluctantly up out of his chair and moved over to where Kruger was sitting.

"Mr. Kruger," he said, as the old man turned to meet him, "I'll make you acquainted with Mr. De Lancey, my partner. My name's Hooker."

"Glad to know you, Hooker," responded Kruger, shaking him by the hand. "How'd Mr. De Lancey?"

He gave Phil a rather crusty nod as he spoke, but De Lancey was dragging up another chair and failed to notice.

"Mr. Hooker was telling me about some proposition you had, to go down into Mexico," he began, drawing up closer while the old man watched him from under his eyebrows. "That's one tough country to do business in right now, but at the same time—"

"The country's perfectly quiet," put in Kruger—"perfectly quiet."

"Well, maybe so," qualified De Lancey; "but when it comes to getting in supplies—"

"Not a bit of trouble in the world," said the old man crabbedly. "Not a bit."

"Well," came back De Lancey, "what's the matter, then? What is the proposition, anyway?"

Henry Kruger blinked and eyed him intently.

"I've stated the proposition to Hooker," he said, "and he refused it. That's enough, ain't it?"

De Lancey laughed and turned away. "Well, yes, I guess it is." Then, in passing, he said to Bud: "Go ahead and talk to him."

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"Sure! But what was his proposition? What did he want you to do?"

FLORENCE IS ACTIVE

Business in Italian City Again Has Full Sway.

All Activities Interrupted by Church Ceremonials Are Again Taken Up—Festa of Santa Giovanna Ends Religious Features.

Florence.—Florence is settling down to business again. All the activities interrupted by church ceremonials are resumed, the